

OREGON 85, AUSTRALIA 76

Oregon wins final exhibition

Head coach Ernie Kent had more questions presented than answered in the Ducks' defeat of the Outback All-Stars

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

With eight days left before his team's first regular season game of the 1997-98 season, Oregon men's basketball coach Ernie Kent has more than a few questions to answer after his team defeated the Outback All-Stars, 85-76, Wednesday night before 5,514 fans at McArthur Court.

Among the problems Kent is faced with in preparation for the Ducks' opener Nov. 21 at Brigham Young are questions at the point guard position, his team's 30 turnovers against the All-Stars, an Australian club team touring the United States, and the fatigue factor.

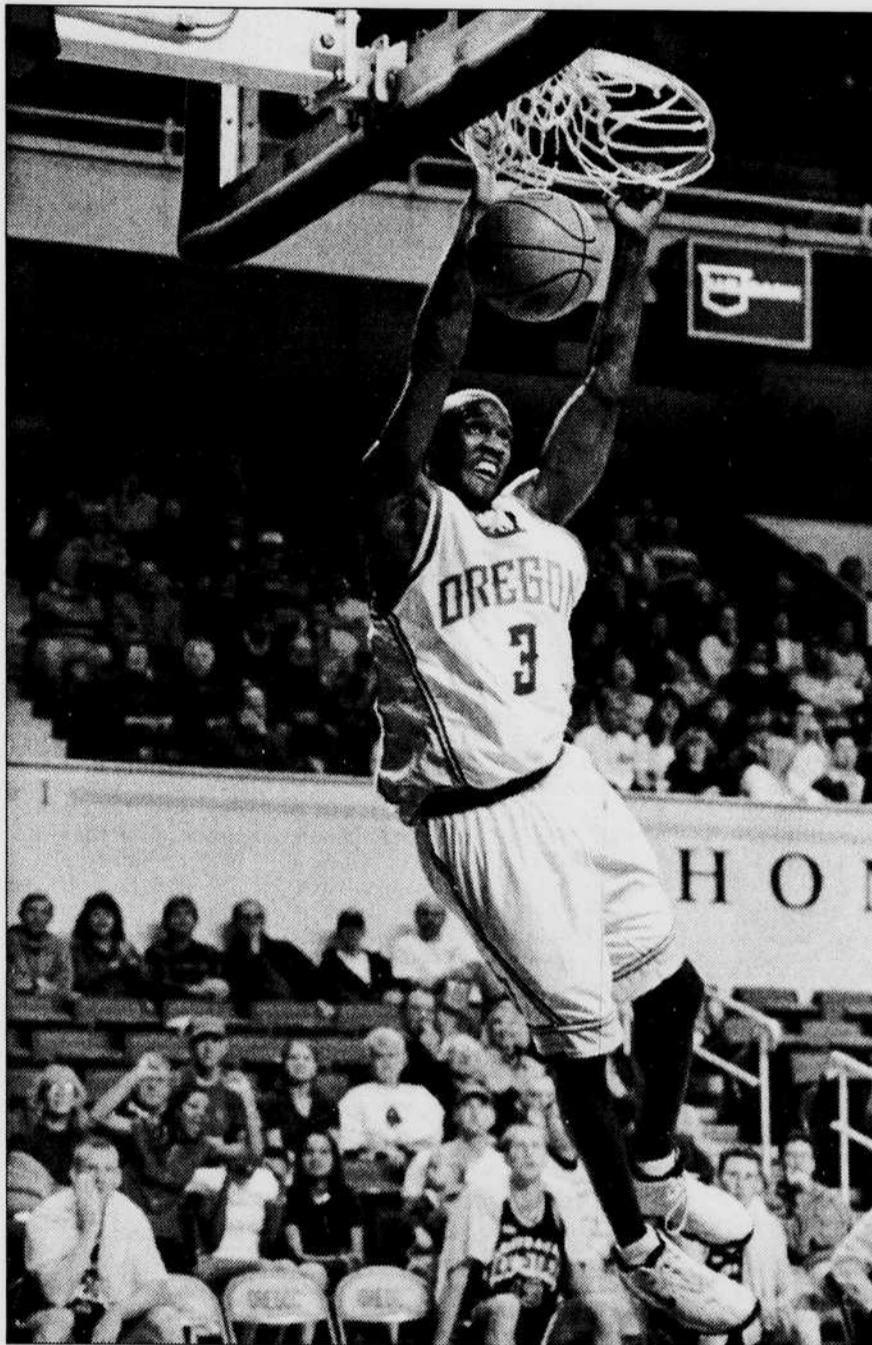
"I was really disappointed in our execution overall, and particularly down the stretch," Kent said. "In the last 12 minutes of the game, we had an opportunity to jump out to a big lead and we hit the wall. I have to question where our conditioning is."

Oregon took its biggest lead of the game on a Yasir Rosemond three-pointer that put the Ducks ahead 70-48 with just over eight minutes to play, but four three-pointers by the All-Stars' Cameron Dickinson and little effort by a tired Oregon defense allowed the Australians to within eight.

However, Oregon's ability to hit free throws at the end of what became an ugly game allowed the Ducks to seal the victory.

Play stopped with 1 minute, 5 seconds remaining in the second half as Oregon's Terik Brown and Troy Pilan of the All-Stars exchanged words. As Brown turned away, Pilan knocked the ball out of his hands and a minor international incident ensued. Henry Madden quickly stepped in to deter any physical contact between the two, but not before Pilan and Donte Quinine traded shoves, drawing a technical foul for each. Pilan's was his fifth foul,

Turn to **EXHIBITION**, Page 12



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

Senior Henry Madden had two of his game-high 24 points on this first-half dunk.

Hey, Ducks, please don't go to Boise

As the Ducks put the finishing touches on the upset of Washington last Saturday, their wilting bowl hopes were taken off life support and given a pretty healthy prognosis.

Win just one of the remaining two games and the Ducks become bowl-eligible. Win them both and it would seem, with a 7-4 record, that they would be all but guaranteed to venture into the postseason for the first time since 1995.

If that scenario plays out, Ducks fans can pack their bags and plan on enjoying a holiday vacation in cities such as Honolulu, Tucson, San Diego or ... Boise.

Boise!?

You've got to be kidding me.

When I think of cities that host bowl games, I think warm climates. I think Miami, New Orleans, Tempe or the aforementioned cities.

I don't think of Boise, Idaho.

But that could be a likely place for the Ducks to be, playing in the Sports Humanitarian Bowl, come bowl time.

A Pacific-10 Conference team will play in the Rose Bowl, Cotton or Holiday bowls, Sun Bowl and Aloha Bowl.

That doesn't necessarily mean the top four teams get those berths, but that will likely be the case.

Barring an unforeseen collapse by one of the four teams tied for first place in the conference now, Oregon, at best, will be the fifth Pac-10 team looking for a bowl.

The Ducks could likely end up in either the Humanitarian Bowl, Las Vegas Bowl or the Independence Bowl, which all have open berths available. The Copper Bowl, now known as the Insight.com Bowl, could also become a possibility if the Big 12 fails to qualify a sixth team for bowl play.

This is basically all speculation at this point. And if the Ducks lose one of their last two games and are barely eligible with six wins, maybe they should consider themselves lucky to be playing anywhere in the

OPINION



Alex Pond

Turn to **POND**, Page 9

Ernst not ready to throw in towel just yet

After recovering from a kidney infection early in the season, outside hitter Madeline Ernst is back to her dominating form

By Rob Moseley
Sports Reporter

With four matches left in the 1997 volleyball season, four chances for Oregon to earn its first win of the Pacific-10 Conference season, which thus far has included 14 losses, junior Madeline Ernst takes a moment to look back on what was supposed to be the Ducks' breakout season.

"Obviously this year has been disappointing to us," the 6-foot-1 outside hitter from St. Paul, Ore., says. "We were hoping for a higher level of success than we have been able to achieve."

But with those four matches left, Ernst cannot be caught looking ahead to next year.

"This season's not over yet, we have four matches left," she says. "I'll start to think about next year when Washington's over."

This was supposed to be Ernst's breakout season as well. She had a team-high for kills in a single match last season with 25 against Arizona State and was expected to replace the graduated Amy Barnes, Oregon's MVP the past two seasons.

With 12 kills in the 1997 home opener against Idaho

State on Sept. 12, it appeared Ernst was confident enough to step into the leadership role vacated by Barnes.

"She played great volleyball at the beginning of the season," head coach Cathy Nelson says. "And our team was playing great volleyball."

But before she had a chance to display that leadership in the Pac-10 the following weekend, she was incapacitated by a kidney infection.

Ernst missed the Ducks' opening weekend of the Pac-10 schedule Sept. 19 and 20, then sat out the Sept. 24 match on the road against Santa Clara before returning to action that weekend in the Bay Area, where she had just 10 kills in seven games and a hitting percentage of minus .048 against California.

"It took her so long to get her game back," Nelson says. "Any time you have to just basically lay down for 10 days, it's going to take you awhile to get back into things. It took her about a month to get back into the swing of things."

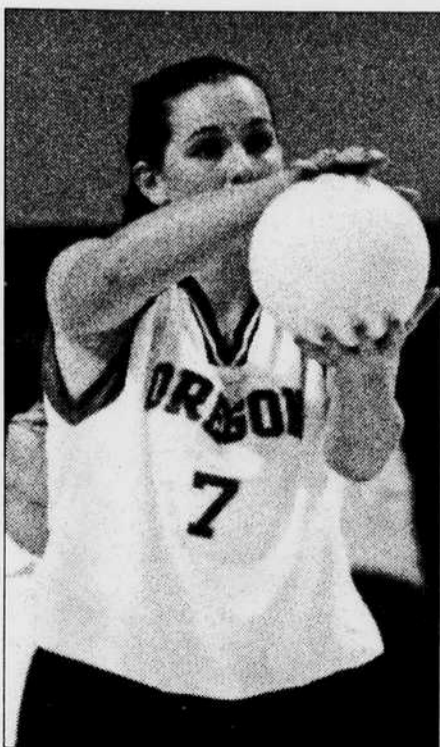
It wasn't until an Oct. 18 meeting with Arizona, almost a month after the initial infection, that Ernst began to regain her early season form. Since her 13-kill performance that night, Ernst has had six straight matches with at least that many, including 21 against both Portland and Southern California and 18 against Oregon State.

"What we're seeing now is what we saw earlier in the

"What we're seeing now is what we saw earlier in the season when the team was doing well and Madeline was a dominating outside hitter."

Cathy Nelson
UO head coach

Turn to **ERNST**, Page 9



WENDY FULLER/Emerald

Ernst has tallied 13 or more kills in each of her last seven matches.